

Focus Area D (Response to Chemical Terrorism) Level-1 Activities

In April, FA-D will present three regional workshops for local health, first responder and law enforcement personnel, continuing our effort to help coordinate a comprehensive response to a chemical incident.

As part of our CDC mandated activities, we have developed a protocol and standard operation procedures (SOP) for collecting human specimens after a chemical incident (accidental or intentional), and are working closely with California Association of Public Health Laboratory Directors (CAPHLD) to deliver them to local partners, such as hospitals, emergency room (ER) physicians, nurses, and clinical laboratories. The Center of Disease Control (CDC) has distributed these protocols to the rest of the Fifty States, and they were also put on the local FBI website. We hope this will lead the law enforcement and first responder communities to consider the collection of biological specimens from the victims or potential victims as an integral part of their response.

In addition, we have developed a comprehensive approach to chemical preparedness training. With the help of National Laboratory Training Network (NLTN), our Assistant Chemical Terrorism Coordinator put together a team of experts, including Monterey Institute for International Study, local OES, FDA, FBI and State Division of Occupational Environmental Disease Control, to present a one-day workshop, with topics ranging from the history of terrorism to collecting and shipping specimens. More than 80 people attended the first presentation on September 3 in Fresno. Attendees were from six counties (Fresno, Kern, King, Madera, Tulare and Riverside), with disciplines across all concerned sectors, such as law enforcement, fire, Hazmat team, local OES, environmental health, public health, and hospital personnel. The response was extremely positive. The participants felt that they were a big leap closer to preparing for a chemical event, a more likely scenario than any other type of terrorist incident.

Based on the responses from that meeting, we added an expert from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) to address the environmental samples, and an expert from the Radiation Health Branch of the State of California to address radiation and nuclear basics. The next three regional training sessions are scheduled for April 15, 2004 at Santa Clara County, April 16, 2004 at San Luis Obispo County and April 28, 2004 at Riverside County. For more information, please contact Kevin Chao at (510) 620-2889.